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STATE OF MARYLAND

A Record of the Achievements of Her People in the Making
of a Commonwealth and the Founding of a Nation

Under the Editorial Supervision of

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ROSS WINANS

ROSS WINANS, famous as an inventor, particularly in the line of locomotive engines, was born at Vernon, New Jersey, in October, 1796. Nothing is told of his early life or education; but he became a farmer and displayed inventive talent by making a new plow. From this time he devoted himself to the study of mechanism, more particularly that of railroads. He invented the friction wheel for cars and the outside bearing on axles, now used altogether by the railways of this country. He also invented the eight-wheel car system.

In 1830 he removed to Baltimore, Maryland, and subsequently the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, recognizing his ability, sent him to England under instructions to study the railway systems of that country. He remained a year, gaining information which proved of the greatest importance not only to the Baltimore and Ohio Company, but to railroad enterprise in general throughout the country. He constructed the first locomotive which was successfully used on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and he invented the style of locomotive known as the "camel-back." He organized the great railway machine shops of Baltimore, the largest in the country, and with the assistance of his sons managed them with great success. Being invited by the Russian Government to build the rolling stock for the Moscow and St. Petersburg Railroad, in 1843, he declined the proposition in favor of his two sons. In 1858 he and his son Thomas constructed the first of the so-called cigar steamers. In a circular issued at that time, this was described as being wholly of iron, and the length "is more than eleven times its breadth of beam, being sixteen feet broad and one hundred and eighty feet long." Others were built in England by his son, but they were not successful. At the time of the Civil War he was also an

inventor of a cannon which was put to use by the Confederates but which proved to be of no lasting worth.

Mr. Winans was an active Democrat; he strongly favored the Southern Confederacy during the Civil War. In 1861 he represented Baltimore in the extra session of the Maryland Legislature. For a time he was imprisoned in Fort McHenry, on account of his opposition to the Federal Government. He made a number of selections from the works of eminent writers on scientific topics, and himself published a number of pamphlets on religious subjects.

His wife, Julia Winans, died May 24, 1850. His two sons, Thomas De Kay and William L. Winans, inherited his mechanical genius. Mr. Winans died in Baltimore, Maryland, April 11, 1877.

